



Scottish Arts Council

## ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

**Artist/Company:** Scottish Dance Theatre

**Venue:** Edinburgh Festival Theatre

**Title of Event:** Spring Tour

**Type of Event:** (e.g. performance, informal showing, work-in-progress, etc)

Performance

**Date of Visit:** 4 May 2005

**Overall Rating** (Please rate the production overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses).

Excellent.

This was an energetic and exhilarating programme of dance showing the versatility of Scottish Dance Theatre and innovative choreography.

Name: Anita Clark      Date: 20 May 2005

Scottish Arts Council Officer

*Please circle the relevant title*

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named below. It has been prepared by either a specialist Advisor, or an officer of the Scottish Arts Council, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work and to the management of the venue, if the venue is core funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The report may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council. It may also be used by the Council to report on the overall performance of its Core Funded organisations.

**Evaluators should enter their rating under each section, explaining briefly their reason for the rating with reference to their comments under each section. Ratings should be given in accordance with the following:**

- 1-Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- 2-Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.
- 3-Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.
- 4-Good** – well conceived and executed
- 5-Excellent** – conceived and executed to a high standard.

## 1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, taking account of the following

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Vision and imagination	5	<p>A great programme of two contrasting pieces of dance; <i>'In fact you <u>can</u> keep a good dog down , but the dog – not knowing this – will keep trying to get up'</i> choreographed by SDT Associate Director, Michael Popper and <i>Luxuria</i>, choreographed by Liv Lorent which was also part of the Autumn tour. <i>404</i>, choreographed by Willi Dorner was also part of the spring programme but was not performed at the Edinburgh Festival Theatre.</p> <p>The diversity of the two pieces provided a well balanced programme and of sufficient length. I think it was the right decision not to include <i>404</i>, in the programme at EFT.</p>
Clarity of communication	5	<p>The programme communicated strongly with the audience. The opening 'air stewards' section of <i>'in fact...'</i> ensured that the audience were on-side and entertained from the start.</p> <p>The company were equally confident in communicating through the beauty and movement of <i>Luxuria</i>.</p>
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	5	<p>In the printed programme, Janet Smith introduces the work of the spring tour as aiming to <i>'tickle, provoke, challenge and moved us through dance theatre that examines the human condition in the here and now.'</i></p> <p>The programme certainly succeeded in achieving this.</p>

## 2. Strengths and Weakness

Assess the strengths and weakness of the event with reference to the following:

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	4	<p><i>'in fact....'</i> is a fun theatrical piece drawing on an eclectic range of dance styles involving 9 members of the company and drawing on their individual personalities to great effect. However the piece was overly long and some editing would tighten up the work.</p> <p>It was a delight to see <i>Luxuria</i> again and it worked wonderfully on the scale of the stage at EFT. The choreography is highly inventive and original with moments of sublime beauty.</p>
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	5	<p>The programme demonstrates the versatility of the SDT dancers, all of whom were equally at home in the humour and quirky moves of <i>in fact....</i> as in the exuberant choreography of <i>Luxuria</i>. The apprentice dancer who stepped into <i>Luxuria</i> did particularly well.</p>

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
		Having seen the programme previously at Dundee Rep, I was unsure who successful the performers would be in projecting the spoken text to the auditorium of the EFT but was delighted that this posed no problems.
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	4	The selection of music used in <i>in fact...</i> was appealing and added greatly to the overall jollity of the piece.  The quality of the sound recording for both pieces was of a good standard.
Design – costume, set, lighting	4	Set and props play a central role in the surreal world of <i>in fact....</i> , adding much to the humour and fantasy of the piece. The section with the three doors and the paper windows, through which arms appeared was a particularly effective use of the set.  The lighting design for <i>Luxuria</i> was particularly successful at the EFT and the silk, crinoline style-dresses work wonderfully and are used to beautiful effect in the choreography.
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	5	Throughout, the technical standards were executed to a very high standard.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	4	The audience at the Festival Theatre was approximately 500. Both pieces of work received a warm and enthusiastic reaction from the audience.

### 3. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and the venue, with reference to the checklist below, including additional comments/observations.

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Suitability of the venue for the event	4	Although EFT is a venue with a large capacity the audience was of a sufficient size within the stalls and circle as to create an atmosphere. The company's work looks good with the facilities at the theatre and <i>Luxuria</i> looked particularly impressive on the wide stage.
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>1</sup>	3	The programme was comprehensive and well produced. It provided good contextual information about the work and introduced the dancers and the choreographer to the audience..

<sup>1</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., assessing the range, quality and clarity

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
		On a practical point, printing articles over images and with dark back grounds makes it difficult for anyone with visual impairment to read. I would suggest that this is given due consideration in future publications.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>2</sup>	3	I received mailings about the show and it also featured in the season brochures of both venues.
Ease of booking and payment	5	Telephone booking at the Festival Theatre was easy and the box office staff were very efficient and helpful.
Location of venue	5	EFT is in the city centre, accessible by public transport and with near-by parking.
External signage and signposting	5	Excellent.
Internal directional signage	4	Good signage with lots of helpful staff if you can't find your seat.
Access and provision for disabled people	4/5	Access at EFT is excellent, as would be expected for a recently refurbished building.
Timing of the event	5	The performance started at 7.30pm and lasted for approximately 1½ hours, with an interval. Preciously in the tour, three pieces had been performed but I think, in this context the two pieces of work was the appropriate programme.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	5	Front of house and bar staff were friendly, helpful and efficient.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>3</sup>	4	Scottish Arts Council was credited in SDT marketing, the programme and on the company website.

<sup>2</sup> Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Please also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised. Comment on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

<sup>3</sup> The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:

"The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc."

Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.